DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 468 524 EA 031 900

AUTHOR	Savoie-Zajc, L.; Brassard, A.; Corriveau, L.; Fortin, R.; Gélinas, A.
TITLE	Role Representations at the Core of School Principals' Practices in the Midst of School Reform in Quebec.
PUB DATE	2002-04-00
NOTE	20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 1-5, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adjustment (to Environment); *Administrator Behavior; Administrator Characteristics; *Administrator Role; *Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Personality Traits; *Principals; *Self Concept
IDENTIFIERS	*Quebec

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to identify how school principals see their roles in the context of change dynamics brought about by school reform. The data come from a study funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The general research objective is to highlight "models of action" that school principals have developed through their years of professional experience. The researchers wish to pinpoint how those "models of action" are challenged when a major school reform is introduced and what kind of adjustments they have to make to their professional practices. Results show that there are eight types of relationships that capture school principals' visions of their roles in the context of change dynamics. Positive relationships include harmonizing diversity, collaborating, vision building, and decision-making. There are relationships tinged with emergency and danger, others characterized by movement and instability, and one describing a relationship of power and influence. These inner images allow proposing a more precise understanding of the subjective meaning principals attribute to their professional role. This understanding will be deepened when these representations can be linked to the intents and strategies underlying the principals' "models of action." (Contains 23 references.) (RT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 468 524

Role representations at the core of school principals' practices in the midst of school reform in Quebec.

Savoie-Zajc, L., Brassard, A., Corriveau, L., Fortin, R. and Gélinas, A.

New Orleans, AERA, April 2002

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. SAVOIE-ZAJC

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

EA031900

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Role representations at the core of school principals' practices in the midst of school reform in Quebec.

Savoie-Zajc, L., Brassard, A., Corriveau, L., Fortin, R. and Gélinas, A.

New Orleans, AERA, April 2002

Keywords: change, professional practice, representation

Introduction

This paper aims to identify how school principals see their roles in the context of change dynamics brought about by school reform. The data come from a study funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The general research objective is to highlight "models of action" that school principals have developed through their years of professional experience. The researchers wish to pinpoint how those "models of action" are challenged when a major school reform is introduced and what kind of adjustments they have to make to their professional practices. Identifying their professional role representations in the changing and turbulent context of the school reform is the concern of this paper. It is only a first step in developing a better understanding of those "models of action."

There are six parts to this paper. The first briefly describes the reform context that Quebec school personnel are faced with. The second introduces the research project, its general as well as specific objectives. In the third, a theoretical framework develops the concepts of educational change processes and experiential learning as seen through the construct of "models of action." Those two concepts are grounded in a larger theoretical perspective, that of symbolic interactionism, which informs the overall research epistemological framework. A fourth part presents the research methodology. In the fifth section, we introduce some quantitative data regarding school principals' general appreciation of the proposed pedagogical and organizational changes the reform planners wish to introduce and implement. Their understanding of the implementation process is also highlighted. Finally, images that school principals choose to illustrate how they see their professional roles in such a turbulent and changing environment are analyzed. They allow a more precise qualitative understanding of the principals' role representations under these conditions. The paper ends with a discussion of the results and a conclusion.

1- The context of school reform in Quebec

A major school reform is under way in Quebec (Department of Education, 1997), affecting both the elementary and high school levels. It started in 1998 and is expected to be completed by 2003 at the elementary level and by 2005 at the high school level. At this time, curriculum will have been entirely renewed. Complex changes are being made. They affect

EA031900

teachers' educational beliefs and values, the curriculum structure and the school management approach.

Since the reform adopts a socio-constructivist framework as its theoretical backbone, the traditional focus on teaching then shifts to student learning: central questions become how do children learn and how can teachers support their learning. As a consequence, teachers are expected to develop competencies in new educational /teaching approaches focussed on student learning, such as cooperative learning and project-centred teaching. They are furthermore asked to plan their teaching activities so as to stimulate the development of integrated learning rather than the mastery of school subjects in the traditionally divided disciplines.

The school grade-level structure is also modified: rather than being divided into two blocks (grades 1 to 3, grades 4 to 6) the elementary level is redesigned into three blocks of two years each. Such restructuring will affect school organization, since teachers will teach and move with their group of pupils for a whole two-year block. They will also be encouraged to modify learning assessment practices and will be expected to stress ongoing student assessment. Models for high school restructuring are still being debated.

Major changes are also affecting school management. Decentralization and a participative approach are central concepts at the core of the new direction taken by reform planners. Schools acquire greater autonomy from their School Board. They have the power to modify educational timetables[1] for instance, and they have the responsibility for developing and pursuing educational projects that will foster student learning, according to each school community's values and needs. Furthermore, schools are expected to budget the necessary financial resources to carry out such projects. Such decentralization gives new powers to schools, from now on managed by governing boards whose president is an elected parent. The school principal is only one of the participants on the board. He or she has the responsibility of preparing the issues to be discussed by the board so as to facilitate group decision-making. While the principals remain influential in the process, they are not expected to be the sole decision-makers and do not even vote. They have to work with the governing board members, that is, parents, teachers, and community representatives, to provide pertinent information in order for the board to reach sound decisions, keeping the pupils' best interests at heart. Governing boards even have the power to specify the professional profile they are looking for when it is time to select a new principal.

This reform, then, represents a major attempt to reorient the educational system. High-level changes are expected from Quebec elementary and high school personnel and school principals are situated at the heart of the changes. They are expected to support teachers in developing and implementing new pedagogical perspectives. They must comfort parents and reassure them in this transition period that their children will not receive lower quality instruction

---

[1] In effect, there is a core timetable, common to all schools, prescribed by the Quebec Department of Education. Each school, however, has the liberty of allocating more hours to a school subject or to develop extra-curricular projects.

and attention. They must adjust their own management style to a more participative one and work with new partners, i.e., members of their school's governing board. Finally, they must learn to tackle with the new responsibilities that are, from now on, assumed by local schools and be accountable for them: budget, relationships with school board, and the professional development policy for personnel, to name only a few.

2- The research context: problem statement and objectives

This SSHRC-funded research project is concerned with the transformation of school principals' practices in this new context. The research aims to highlight the "models of action" that school principals have developed over their years of professional experience. The researchers wish to pinpoint how those "models of action" are challenged when a major school reform is introduced and study the dynamic nature of the adjustments principals have to make to their professional practices.

In engaging in such a study, we find support from Fullan who writes:

> "While research in school improvement is now in its third decade, systematic research on what the principal actually does and its relationship to stability and change is quite recent. Some of the earlier implementation research identifies the role of the principal as central to promoting and inhibiting change, but it did not examine the principal's role in any depth or perspective. During the 1980's research and practice focusing on the role of the principalship, assistant principalship, and other school leaders mounted, resulting in greater clarity, but also greater appreciation of the complexities and different paths to success" (Fullan, 2001, p. 138).

This research attempts to shed more light on the images school principals hold of their role, functions, and specific responsibilities during times of complex, mandated, systemic changes called for by the previously described Quebec reform. The identification of their professional role representation, discussed in this paper, is but a first step in developing a better understanding of their "models of action" as they are challenged by the reform context.

From the results, the researchers will be able to offer specific suggestions and guidelines to promote specific training activities and various kinds of professional support to school principals in order for them to guide their school personnel through the expected transformations of professional practices. as well as to make adjustments to their own practices.

We will examine, in this paper, the understanding school principals have of the reform implementation process as well as the core images, and how they see their roles in the turbulent environment of the reform context. Those representations provide a basis for the models of action

school principals have created over the years, which are now challenged in the context of new values and new paradigms the reform is built upon.

3- Theoretical framework

In order to understand the dynamics of change at work in a time of school reform implementation, the study borrows from symbolic interactionism the importance of understanding the phenomenon from the actors' perspectives. We will also rely on educational change literature and the emphasis given by Fullan to approaching change from subjective and objective dimensions will be reviewed. Finally, the "models of action" construct will be defined as well as the concept of representation.

a) Symbolic Interactionism

G.H. Mead (1934) introduced ideas that have proven to be very influential in the development of the concept of symbolic interactionism. In effect, he says that we become what we are thanks to our interaction with society. In the process of doing so, one has to take *the role of others* and from there, build one's own representation of one's social role. As Crotty (1998) argues, such a position has given rise to the central element in symbolic interactionism: that situations need to be understood from the points of view of social actors. People attribute meaning to their acts and they establish dynamic relationships through the use of symbolic objects, language for instance, thus forming the basis of their world of reference (Blumer, 1969).

The perspective of symbolic interactionism provides the study with its epistemological grounding. That is, we consider school principals as people playing a professional role that is being constructed and reconstructed through the social interactions they maintain with significant actors: teachers, children, school personnel, parents, to name but a few. The models of action they have built over the years are to be studied through interactions they establish with their surroundings and through the meanings they attribute to those interactions. The research then proceeds from the actors' perspectives and will provide a qualitative understanding of their models of action.

Fullan's multidimensional change proposition is compatible with the symbolic interactionism framework and with the "models of action" construct defined later in this paper.

b)- Change processes in the context of a systemic school reform

Fullan (1992, 2001) promotes the idea that change is multidimensional. In effect, in order for people to engage in a change pattern, they have to develop a representation of the meaning of change. What does this change proposal mean for individuals; how does they see themselves in this change pattern? Is it compatible with the idea they have of their role, and the

values they hold regarding themselves and their professional practice? Those questions refer to what Fullan calls the "subjective dimension" of change. The second aspect of change is referred to as the "objective dimension," that is, the specific competencies one wishes to develop in order to actively engage in the change pattern. However, one has to develop relevant subjective meanings about any change project before any training is to be profitable and lead to transformation of professional practice.

Since the changes we are considering are mandated in a reform context, it seems appropriate to define that term.

Morris (1997) proposes a definition of the notion of reform. He says it consists of "rather long periods of time in which loose collections of activities are initiated that are perceived collectively to be part of the same reform effort " (p. 23). He further conceptualizes innovations as "reform activities put forward as efforts within a reform movement, believed to be consistent with its objectives, and considered to contribute toward the achievement of those objectives" (p. 23). These definitions stress the social and cognitive constructions that participants in a reform achieve when they see that the efforts to foster implementation are coherent and goal driven. However, Cohen (1995) and Fullan (1994) remain sceptical about the efficiency of systemic reforms. Quoting Sarason, Fullan (1994) claims that millions of dollars have been spent in the United States in order to sustain various school reforms using authoritative strategies, that is, change imposed from the top of the hierarchy down to the teachers. This has led to very disappointing results. So we thus need to learn how to coordinate authoritative strategies with participative change strategies, since the latter, when used by themselves, most often lead to inertia and have reduced capacities for deep value changes (Fullan, 1994). The Department of Education is at the top of the educational hierarchy and has the authority to initiate system-wide reform. However, promulgated changes must, somehow, be appropriated locally and the idea that reform implementation is achieved by paying attention to local values and by supporting school reculturing is pervasive in the literature dealing with school reform. Reculturing, then, is seen as a prerequisite for restructuring (Fullan, 1992; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Sarason, 1982, 1990).

c)-Models of action

Based upon concepts developed by Argyris and Schön (1974), Schön (1983) and Watzlawick (1988) regarding the internal models one holds and the gap that might exist between preferred action models and actual practice, Bourassa, Serres and Ross (1999) have proposed the following definition of models of action. They are "routines based upon representations of reality, intents et recurrent strategies that have developed over the years in order for the practitioners to better adapt to their environment and learn from it" (p. 60). They are, in effect, internal rules of conduct people have built through their years of experience.

The following diagram illustrates its dynamics:

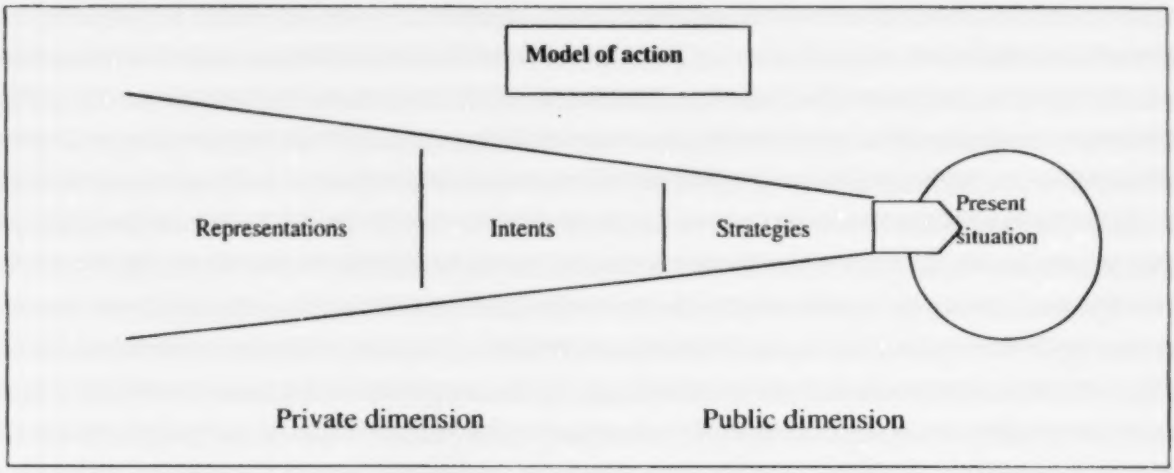

Fig. 1. Structure of a model of action (Bourrassa, Serres and Ross, 1999, p. 61)

The model proposes that practitioners engage in actions according to the meanings they attribute to a situation. Those meanings are complex. They are made up of representations, which are defined as organized sets of beliefs, attitudes, and ideas one has developed over time (Abric, 1993), and in the course of social interactions (Jodelet, 1993; Moscovici, 1981; Rouquette and Garnier, 1999). Furthermore, practitioners engage in actions because they pursue specific intents. These refer to the goals one has in mind when one engages in actions. Finally, practitioners choose, from among a repertoire of strategies, which are the actions one actually takes, those that seem more appropriate and relevant. This organized set of representations, intents and strategies produce results, which correspond (or not) to what was aimed at. Models of action are comprised of what appear to be the strategic elements that make up a professional practice.

Sergiovanni defines professional practice as an articulated set of "intents, actions, and realities" (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 13) that school principals make sense of and utilize in order to manage their school. He acknowledges the complexity and ill-defined nature of school problems and, as a result of this very specific organizational context, the utmost importance of training school principals in order to become effective reflective practitioners. He writes: "It seems clear that reflective principals are in charge of their professional practice" (1991, p. 10). They then develop, through their daily practice and reflections upon it, models of action that are at the core of the acts they pose and the decisions they make.

This paper will attempt to underline the subjective meanings that school principals hold regarding the process of change from their vantage point as school leaders. We will provide data regarding their understanding of the many changes proposed by the reform as well as their understanding of the implementation process. We will then analyze the images they have of their

professional role. This will be instrumental in identifying their role representations in relation to change dynamics in the present context of school reform.

4- Research methodology and data sources:

The research methodology can be described as a mixed methodology type since it combines quantitative and qualitative data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The study is designed in two phases.

In the first phase, a questionnaire (Likert-scale like and open-ended answers) was developed in order to get at the overall understanding school principals had regarding the values conveyed by the reform. Its content was validated by six retired school principals and was later sent to the 3,100 elementary and high school principals throughout Quebec (February 2000), including principals from vocational training centres. A total of 544 persons answered the questionnaire for a return rate of 17%[2].

Sex:	Female: 31%
	Male: 69%
Function:	Vice-principal: 19%
	Principal: 81%
Type of school:	Elementary school: 60%
	Secondary school: 28%
	Vocational centre: 1%
	Adult education centre: 4%
	More than one school: 7%

Table 1. Profile of questionnaire respondents

The second phase of the research was carried out through semi-structured interviews. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they were interested in pursuing these concerns. Those willing to be interviewed were to provide their name, address, phone number as well as information regarding the type of school. This information was returned in a different envelope in order to protect the confidentiality of the questionnaire. Forty-six percent (46.8%) of the respondents indicated their willingness to be interviewed and a sample of 70 school principals

[2] Such a low return rate can be partly attributed to existing tensions in the schools during the fall of 1999 caused by contract negotiations carried on between the teachers' union and the Department of Education. The researchers chose to wait until February 2000 before sending the questionnaires so that the school climate could improve. However, we assume that the many tensions that accumulated during the fall took a long time to quiet down and the school principals were much affected by such a tense climate in their schools.

was drawn according to demographic as well as geographic characteristics since the researchers wanted to meet with principals across the province of Quebec. Interviews were conducted between the months of November 2000 and February 2001. Table 2 presents the profiles of interviewees.

Sex:	Female: 50%
	Male: 50%
Type of:	Elementary school: 56%
school	Secondary school: 32%
	More than one school: 7%
	Other: 5%

Tab. 2. Profile of interviewees

In order to understand the subjective meaning school principals hold regarding change, we borrowed from Morgan (1993) the recourse to images and metaphors. Morgan attributes to metaphor the following functions:

> " . . . it's a primal means through which we forge our relationships with the world. Metaphors have a formative impact on language, on the construction and embellishment of meaning, and on the development of theory and knowledge of all kinds" (p. 277).

We then asked school principals to choose an image that represented their vision of their roles in the context of a school reform and rapid changes.

5- Results and discussion

Data from the questionnaire show that school principals hold an overall positive assessment of the change orientations stressed by the reform, even though their agreement is stronger for aspects that deal with the curriculum to be implemented and transformation of professional practices (cumulative mean of 3.55) than for the structural and organisational changes (cumulative mean of 3.33).

N= 544	Do not agree %	Agree a little %	Moderately agree %	Strongly agree %	Mean /4
The curriculum					
1-New programs	1.8	9.4	36.1	52.7	3.4
2-Transdisciplinary perspective	3	10	35.2	51.8	3.36
3-Changes in teaching practices	0.6	4.1	18.8	766	3.71
4-Emphasis on general education	0.4	4.3	27.1	68.3	3.63
5-Restructuring of school year into three blocks	0.9	8.5	33	57.5	3.47
6-Introduction of new technologies	0.4	2.2	19.3	78.2	.75
Cumulative mean					3.55
The Reform Act (Bill 180)	Do not agree %	Agree a little %	Moderately agree %	Strongly agree %	Mean /4
7-Role and power of school governing boards	3	15	42	39	3.18
8-Participative decision making (parents)	2.7	18.6	458	32.8	3.09
9-Participative decision making (school personnel)	1.1	4.4	28.3	66.2	3.6
10-Power regarding school timetable	2.8	8.6	27.3	61.3	3.47
11-Schools and school boards: new sharing of powers and responsibilities	3.7	10.1	33	53.3	336
12-School accountability	2.6	6.5	33.6	57.4	3.46
13-Mandatory relationships between school and its community	3.9	16.9	38.7	40.6	3.16
Cumulative mean					3.33

Table 3 Agreements toward the actual changes brought about by the reform (Brassard & al., 2001)

In the curriculum changes section, it is interesting to note that school principals have a stronger support for those changes affecting teaching practices (#3, #6). The curriculum changes receiving the least support, relatively, refer to the general transdisciplinary perspective (#2), which the principals do not believe the reform planners have made sufficiently clear, and which generates, still today, many questions. School principals show weaker support for changes

affecting directly their management practices, those elements grouped under "The Reform Act/Bill 180". Interestingly enough they appear to favour participative decision making with teachers (#9) more than with parents (#8). Answers provided by the respondents to those two questions correspond to the highest mean (#9, 3.6) and the lowest mean (#8, 3.09) of the change propositions, in this second section.

Data from Table 4 demonstrates a somewhat different picture than Table 3. Even though they express an overall positive appreciation of the reform orientations, the principals recognize that the reform itself will not be easily implemented; it is perceived as complex, difficult to explain and not based upon needs expressed by teachers.

N= 534	Not at all %	A little %	Moderate %	Very %	Mean /4
1- complex	3.6	21.0	48.7	26.6	3.01
2- wide scope	1.1	3.9	30.5	64.4	3.8
3- based on serious motives	0.9	6.8	33.5	58.8	3.5
4- easy to explain	23.0	39.3	30.7	7.0	2.22
5- supports school success	2.7	10.5	49.2	37.6	3.22
6- beneficial for teachers	5.0	20.4	50.3	24.4	2.9
7- beneficial for students	1.1	6.5	29.6	62.7	3.54
8- perceived as necessary by school personnel	18.8	47.0	27.6	6.5	2.22
9- consistent with my beliefs	1.5	4.7	30.3	63.5	3.56
10- consistent with actual school orientation	5.1	27.2	52.2	15.5	2.78
11- easy to implement	0.2	36.6	41.9	20.2	1.85

Table 4. School principals' assessment of the reform

Table 4 shows their assessment of the reform: it is seen as a broad reform (#2), consistent with their beliefs (#9) and well justified (#3). Students are expected to benefit more from it (#7) than teachers (#6). However, more than 50% of the respondents maintain that they see the reform as complex (#1), not easy to explain (#4) and not perceived as necessary by the school personnel (#8). This information, when linked to change concepts, sends a distress signal, since school personnel have difficulty understanding it and do not see it as necessary. Implementation is not

going to be easy, a judgement that is shared by the school principals since the mean on the question of perceived ease of implementation (#11) is only 1.85 /4, the lowest of all.

As mentioned previously, in order to have access to principals' role representations as managers of change dynamics and their perceptions of the specific responsibilities they have during this period of school reform, we asked them, during the interviews, to choose an image representing the role they saw themselves playing during this period of turbulent change.

From a total of 70 interviews, 50 school principals (71.3%) provided an image (or images[3]) they felt captured their feelings as well as the inner, personal meaning for them of the role they had to play during this period of school reform.

Seventy-four percent (74%) of the images chosen by principals refer to a person. Twenty-two percent (22%) are associated with an object. Four percent (4%) of the images represent a dynamic (collegiality, or a network, for instance) or a role (visionary).

In the "person" group of images, these can be further classified into three large categories. The first one shows a person in an organizational role; the second one represents people in a collaborative role and the third one pictures people in terms of their trade. Table 5 presents the images in categories.

b) Managerial people	
Leader	6
Coordinator	3
Manager	2
c) Collaborative people	
Resource person	3
Animator	2
Educator	1
Guide	1
Collaborator	1
Team member	1

d) Working people	
Ship captain	5
Conductor	3
Firefighter	3
Jack-of-all-trade	2
Juggler	1
Lighting technician in a theatre production	1
Service person	1
Soldier	1
Salesperson	1
Cook	1
Judge	1
Gardener	1

Table 5. Images of people

The second group of images are those associated with an "object."

[3] A total of 61 images were described.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Street intersection	3	Main road	1
Anchor	1	Punching bag	1
Ship	1	Enterprise	1
Octopus	1	Spinning top	1
English country garden	1	Rock surrounded by water	1
Web site	1	Engine	1

Table 6. Images associated with an object

The third group of images are those representing a "dynamic."

Vision building	3
Collegiality	1
Collaboration	1
House building	1

Table 7. Images associated with a dynamics

The epistemological perspective of symbolic interactionism provides us with dimensions that should be taken into account in order to attribute meaning to those images. For example, it could be the symbolic objects embodied in those images, or the nature of the relationships school principals have established with their environment. We have chosen the latter since the nature of the relationships provides us with the general orientations those social actors assume their professional role in a changing, turbulent environment. Furthermore, describing the nature of the relationships give access to the core of their role representations in a period of mandated change: it is through the various interactions they establish with others that they position themselves as change managers or change facilitators, depending on the vision they hold.

Eight types of relationships capture school principals' visions of their roles in the context of this change dynamics. There are harmonizing diversity, collaborating, vision building, and decision-making relationships. Then there are relationships tinged with emergency and danger, others that convey security, others characterized by movement, instability and finally, as a last category, one describing a relationship of power and influence.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1- Harmonizing diversity (Conductor, cook, gardener, jack-of-all-trade, coordinator, street intersection, octopus, English country garden)	15 images	24.%
2- Collaborating (Lighting technician, service person, resource person, animator, educator, guide, collaborator, team member, web site, collegiality, collaboration)	14 images	22.9%
3- Vision building (Leadership, enterprise, vision building, house building)	12 images	19.7%
4- Decision-making (Ship's captain, judge, manager, main road, engine)	10 images	16.4%
5- Protecting (Firefighter, soldier, punching bag)	5 images	8.2%
6- Providing security (Anchor, rock)	2 images	3.3%
7- Living with movement and instability (Spinning top, juggler)	2 images	3.3%
8- Influencing (Salesperson)	1 image	1.6%

Table 6. Categories of relationships conveyed through images

Except for the categories representing relationships tinged with a sense of emergency and danger (#5), as well as movement and instability (#7), which are seen to be stressful relationships with change, and the one of influence and profit (#8), which is seen as manipulative, the five other categories convey a positive, constructive attitude toward change dynamics. They account for 86.9% of the total images collected through the semi-structured interviews. This does not mean, however, that school principals do not experience stress while they see themselves in a position of harmonization of diversity, for instance. It means that their representations of change dynamics and the role they assume in this dynamic are basically positive.

5.1- Harmonizing diversity

These principals see themselves as linked with their environment. Their main concerns focus on the management of a variety of people, all endowed with unique characteristics. They see themselves as responsible for taking such diversity into account and managing it, in order to produce either a harmonious work environment or a productive learning environment. However,

the cost they have to bear for having this kind of representation is linked to becoming overloaded with demands in order to respect such diversity. In this case, the harmonious effect is at risk of disappearing in favour of a more superficial problem-solving attitude. This form of role representation is the one most frequently held in the images collected.

5.2- Collaborating

This type of relationship fits in well with the values called for by the reform. Participative management orientations or the current advocacy of developing a collaborative culture in schools are consistent with this kind of role representation where the principal sees him or herself as a member of a collaborative team.

5.3- Vision building toward a goal

This role representation places principals in a leadership position. From this perspective, goals are handed down, thus sending clear messages to the community regarding the directions to be taken. However, this representation does not clarify how the principal intends to provide a vision or does not suggest any interpretations of the degree of openness to other actors in developing such vision. Traditional, authoritative leaders also provide a vision, in which they embody the organization and position themselves at the top of the hierarchy.

5.4- Decision-making

In this role representation, school principals are clearer about the role they intend to play in a change situation. They are in the drivers' seat. There can be consultations but one person makes the decisions. These principals holding such a representation position themselves at the centre of decision-making.

5.5- Providing security

This representation is most intriguing. Those principals assume a role in their school where others can find stability and security when everything else is moving. However such a fixed resting point can also be related to immobility and synonymous with not going anywhere.

The last three representations seem to convey a more stressful relationship with the change dynamics.

5.6- Protecting

School principals see themselves in a state of danger. They adopt this dynamic in order to protect others. The reward for doing so appears to be associated with knowing that one has helped or protected the others. However, such a representation suggests a stressful relationship with the change process.

5.7- Living with movement and instability

This representation is linked in some way to the preceding one (5.6). School principals see themselves in a constant search for equilibrium, for precarious stability. While there is no sense of danger associated with this role representation, stress is still there.

5.8- Influencing

This last category of role representation shows the school principals in an influential position. Their role consists of selling ideas to others. This representation conveys a sense that one is detached from the object of change, which takes the form of a good to be exchanged through a process of negotiation.

5.9- Discussion

This look into school principals' inner images of the roles they play in the context of change dynamics allowed us to propose a more precise understanding of the subjective meaning they attribute to their professional role. This understanding will be deepened when the researchers link those representations to the intents and strategies underlying their "models of action." Data discussed in this paper has led us to consider only the basics of "models of action," that is, the representations.

Some elements can be stressed: the importance of respecting their school teachers' individuality (#1), the attention to providing resources (#7), orientation (#3, #4) and care (#5, #6) for the personnel as a member of the school team (#2) or from a position of influence (#8).

Data from the questionnaire showed that principals were more concerned with changes in the organizational structure than with changes in the curriculum, probably because this first category of changes directly affected their management style and their relationships with their professional environment. They however expressed a feeling of responsibility for clarifying and reducing ambiguities relating to changes in curriculum. Such a supportive stance toward teachers and parents is echoed by messages communicated by the images. Furthermore, those linked to "harmonization of diversity" and "collaborative relationships" are consistent with the spirit of the

reform as well as with the perspective currently developing in the literature on educational change. We saw earlier that the reform plans to introduce learner-centred educational perspectives and a new organizational structure based on collaboration and participation. Such underlying values are shared with two types of relationships identified in the images (#1, 2). Furthermore, Fullan's ideas about the promotion of reculturing rather than restructuring introduced earlier, appear to be well understood by those who have a more collaborative orientation (#1, #2). Those constitute 47.5% of images. They also express of vision of leadership that favours participation and collaboration, which are important characteristics of effective leaders (Koffi, Moreau and Laurin, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1991).

Sergiovanni (1991) refers to a study conducted in 1989 by Smith and Andrews (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 29) dealing with roles effective leaders play according to teachers. Roles are grouped under four headings: principal as resource provider, principal as instructional resource, principals as communicator and principal as visible presence. It is under the heading of "principal as visible presence" that the highest ratings are found. For instance, a strong leader, in the eyes of teachers, is an active participant in staff development activities (97% of ratings) and is seen as accessible to discuss educational matters (94% of ratings). Such attributes and roles of effective leaders are clearly related to the collaborative relationship (#2) presented in the images where principals saw themselves as members of the school team and as there for their teacher colleagues.

In 11.5% of the representations (#5 and #7) the relationships with change dynamics are tinged with stress.

Those persons are more at risk of burnout and loss of enthusiasm. For those experiencing difficulty when managing changes in the reform context, specific support should be offered. This could take the form of coaching, or support-group discussions in which each participant shares with others their concerns regarding change dynamics and strategies to develop in order to find psychological and organizational support.

References

Abric, J. C. (1993). L'étude expérimentale des représentations sociales. Dans D. Jodelet (dir.) *Les représentations sociales.* Paris: Presses universitaires de France. P. 187-203.

Argyris, C. & Schön, D.A. (1974). *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Inc.

Bourassa, B. Serres, F. and Ross, D. (1999). *Apprendre de son expérience*. Ste-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Brassard, A. and al. (2001). Les directions d'établissement et les changements en éducation. GRIDES: Unpublished research report

Cohen, D.K. (1995). What Is the System in Systemic Reform?. *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 24, #9, 11-17.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Pub.

Department of Education. (1997). *Projet de loi modifiant la loi sur l'instruction publique et diverses dispositions législatives*. Gouvernement du Québec.

Fullan, M. (1992). *Successful School Improvement*. Toronto: OISE Press.

Fullan, M. (1994). Coordinating Top-Down and Bottom-Up Strategies for Educational Reform, *The Governance of Curriculum*. ASCD. 186-202.

Fullan, M. (2001). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. New York: Teachers College Press. 3rd edition.

Fullan, M. & Hargreaves, A. (1992). Teacher Development and Educational Change. In M. Fullan & A. Hargreaves (Éds), *Teacher Development and Educational Change* (p. 1-9). London: The Falmer Press.

Jodelet, D. (1993). *Les représentations sociales*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Koffi, V., Laurin, P. & Moreau, A. (1998). *Quand l'école se prend en main*. Ste-Foy: PUQ.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Morgan, G. (1993). *Imaginization: The Art of Creative Management*. Newbury Park: Sage Pub.

Morris, D.P. (1997). Adrift in the Sea of Innovations: A Response to Alexander, Murphy, and Woods. *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 26, #4, 22-26.

Moscovici, S. (1981). On Social Representations. In Forgas, J.P. (ed), *Social Cognition. Perspectives on Everyday Understanding*. London: Academic Press, p. 181-209.

Rouquette, M.L. and Garnier, C. (1999). *La genèse des représentations sociales*. Montréal: Éd. Nouvelles.

Schön, D.A. (1983). *The Reflexive Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Book.

Sergiovanni, T.J. (1991). *The Principalship: A Reflexive Practice Perspective*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon.

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed Methodology : Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Pub.

Watzlawick. P. (1988). *L'invention de la réalité: contributions au constructivisme*. Paris: Ed. du Seuil.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: ROLE REPRESENTATIONS AT THE CORE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PRACTICES IN THE MIDST OF SCHOOL REFORM IN QUEBEC.

Author(s): SAVOIE-ZAJC, L. / BRASSARD, A. / CORRIVEAU, L. / FORTIN, R. / GELINAS, A.

Corporate Source: UNIVERSITY OF QUEBEC IN HULL (1st author)

Publication Date: APRIL 2002.

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 1	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2A	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2B
Level 1 ↑ [X]	Level 2A ↑ [ ]	Level 2B ↑ [ ]
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: Lorraine Savoie Zajc.	Printed Name/Position/Title: LORRAINE S ZAJC / PROFESSOR
Organization/Address: UQAH - POBox 1250, station B HULL. J8X 3X7 CANADA.	Telephone: 819-595-3900x1440 FAX: 819-595-4459
	E-Mail Address: lorraine_savoie@uqah.uquebec.ca (over) Date: April 18 2002

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfacility.org